

YOUR SAFETY INDEX

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TREASURES NEW AND OLD
MATTHEW 13:52

Your Safety Index

For many years, Lk. 21:36 has been constantly dinned in our ears as an encouragement to be watchful and pray. It is so we might be able to escape the tough things scheduled for all the nations in rebellion to the loving Father's plan. It is so we might have the ability and strength to stand, knowing He is present with us, in spite of the seeming inevitability of catastrophe in Great Tribulation. The word "dinned" is used here with purpose. It refers to uttering an insistent sound which may confuse the listener. Many assemblies have listened to many words from their leaders--but, not having fully heard them, the result is a measure of confusion.

The voice on the Mount of Transfiguration did not instruct the Disciples to believe in Jesus so they would be saved. The instruction was to hear the Beloved Son. Today, the Beloved Son is to be heard through the few, very few mouthpieces He Himself has chosen. But Christendom has not yet been trained to actually hear. If it had, there would long ago have been a wholesale, world-wide response. And the 20th Century would not then have become characterized by two World Wars, and a third on the near horizon, with its double intensity to exterminate all flesh on earth, unless Jesus Christ personally intervenes (Ezek. 21:14 literal, Matt. 24:22).

So again, we should hear this exhortation. Pray much that you will come to stand and be able to continue to stand on that firm bedrock which is the wholeness of Truth--not on that which is fragmented rock, not on that which crumbles under pressure. Because you here see and know you have much more of the Truth opened up to your vision than does the Church membership "down the street," do you picture yourself secure, as a queen sitting upon a throne, no longer as a widow whose Husband is absent, and therefore never to see suffering and sorrow (Rev. 18:7-8)? As you compare your understanding with the traditional Christian of today, do you in effect claim to be

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rich and prosperous and in need of no further
slaving for more Truth (Rev. 3:15-18)?

Not having been under an intense and insistent pressure that will yet drive weaker men into intolerable anguish and heart failure, how can you be certain of not slipping off the Bedrock on which you think you are now standing? Was Peter a second rate follower of Christ among his peers? Three times the Lord asked Peter if he loved Him--more than the others, as the Father, and as a close friend (Jhn. 21:15-17). Peter was still certain he did. But previously, Jesus had to pray especially for Peter that his faith would not fail. Peter had proclaimed his readiness to follow his Lord into anything (Lk. 22:32-34). Peter was sincere, but unready and did not realize it.

Are you more mature than he who the Lord said was the greatest of all His prophets? John the Baptist had the exceedingly great honor of introducing the Messiah to his countrymen. But John flunked the testing under Herod's pressure, through not having actually heard the wholeness of Truth (Isa. 61:1, Matt. 11:2-6, 14:10).

Are you more steadfast in fulness of faith than the other Apostles and Disciples? According to the Record, when the pressure became intense, they all deserted their Lord and scattered (Zech. 13:6-7, Matt. 26:31). Again, He found no man who would intervene for utter righteousness (Isa. 59:14-16).

Will it be different today, in a period of the most intense pressures and the most dire emergencies in history, upon all people of all nations? What indicators do we have from prophecy? "Will I find the Faith on earth when I return?" asked the Lord (Lk. 18:8). "I have trodden the wine-press (the grape types the Christian) and of the people (more than Israel) there was no one with Me....There was no one to uphold Truth, so My right arm brought Me victory" (Isa. 63:3, 5). And there are even more testi-

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monies to today's deficiencies in Christendom. Have you gone so far as to be immune to slipping off the Rock?

Most of those who wear the Christian label expect to be taken out in a rapture prior to any testing, let alone severe testing. Others, perhaps you, expect to have the Lord's full protection before and during The Great Tribulation, as offered in Ps. 91--while others are ground under the heel of the oppressor. It may be you expect the Lord's complete provisioning for all your needs, while others experience intense shortage. Possibly you expect peace and calm in your heart, while a massive whirlwind of turmoil and civil insurrection sweeps over the land, and others are in agony. Maybe you anticipate the continuous presence of strong leaders by your side, always, to encourage and to help and to stand with you. Did not Peter expect the same?

You may anticipate the Truth setting you free and keeping you free. But a reminder might be in place to those who are still actively searching. Every once in a while, something comes up which shows one's "truth" needing at least slight adjustment to match an actual Truth just opened up to view. Now how much real Truth is necessary, before you can be sure of our Lord's full and complete protection and His provision for needs in dire emergencies, as promised in Ps. 91? You don't know, do you, unless and until your Teacher calls you and tells you. From parabolic patterns, we are told even the Firstfruits Bride company will come under such testing that she will call out, "Lord, don't you care if we perish?" It is afterward that she will be lifted out (Lk. 8:22-26). After 1900 years of Christendom rejecting Truth in large measure, is not a testing of faithfulness properly in order for all (Rev. 12:9)?

Therefore, the thoughtful few will now admit that each one must have more Truth than at present is possessed, even to move toward that complete protection and provision. Anyone who

has contracted any illness or mishap recently should understand that, for God does not change (Mal. 3:6, Ex. 23:25-27). And the Master Plan shows that for by far most, if not all, the additional Truth required will be gained only through the helps available within an immediate assembly of active followers of Christ, in which all of like mind continue their intensive search.

The responsibility for building up Christ's Body is given to the members of the assembly, not vested in isolated special ministries (Eph. 4:12-14). Each one has an assigned duty for building within his group with real Truth; we cannot effectively function without continually gaining more full Truth with which to work. That full Truth adds to the Bedrock upon which we stand and endure. On anything else, even partial truth, we eventually lose footing and fall and fall.

So pray much that you will be found established on the permanent Bedrock of the whole Truth which is descriptive of the full and complete "name" of Jesus Christ, our Lord and our Keeper-God. But be aware of and heed the root derivation of this word "pray." It is taken from a word picturing an inseparable binding to, an intertwining with, a being so wrapped up with and around by Jesus Christ and His Word as to be indistinguishable from His name or nature. This praying therefore involves thinking and desiring and speaking wholly within the frame of His will and plan. "Not my will, but yours be done."

It is in this context of Lk. 21:36 that you pray, thoughtfully and constructively, refraining from mechanical repetition which drifts into ritual--an abomination before the Lord. If your prayer is to attain a standing at the Throne of Grace, it is to be prayer in spirit and in truth. It is impossible to pray in spirit with the mind elsewhere; you must learn to involve the whole of your being in concentration on the Lord all through the prayer. There is no praying in Truth outside of God's plan for good health of spirit,

soul and body. That is carefully detailed in the Word of God for all who are willing to hear--not just listen. But remember to carry on a balance of thanksgiving and recognition of His Being and His benefits through objective worship. Spend the time to learn to pray in spirit and in Truth, so you don't waste God's time.

Because of its importance to your group, to your leaders and to yourself of well-designed prayer, include prayer supplication that our loving Father give heed to the need of your assembly and give His special attention and help. Ask His help toward attaining needed spiritual growth in the understanding of actual Truth and toward the integration of that Truth in daily living. Request His guidance into development of at least an adequate strength to come to righteous judgments in every Valley of Decision and emerge clean from each Valley of Troubling (Hos. 2:15-16, Joel 3:12-14).

The Lord's instruction, particularly to those in our own generation, was that we be constantly watchful over the development of His plan in and around us and constantly pray (Lk. 21:36). The command was not so much to pray for worthiness, but to come into constant prayer of such a nature and content that we might be helped to gain more light of understanding and, by practice of the Truth, come into more wisdom and more strength and more ability. He inferred that then we could be accounted worthy, having made ourselves worthy through the helps and grace of the loving Father. Paul also wrote of this. "Work out your own preservation." (Phil. 2:12) Please note this distinction, or you may not pray as you ought so that your prayer be heard.

If you take a thoughtful look at your own physical-emotional being, you will note that the enlightening, building and strengthening is accomplished by the coordinated efforts of the ears, eyes, brain, feet, hands, mouth, nose, alimentary tract, lungs, heart, etc. Your spirit does not even attempt the gathering and

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integrating of the input; it coordinates, or should. The continuous daily work of enlightening and building and strengthening of the corporate group is designed in the identical pattern. It is to be accomplished by its many members. So you will need the Lord's special attention upon you individually, if you are to become as effective a member of the corporate body as you should be.

Therefore, pray thoughtfully and in earnest for help in your filling out the Master Plan within your microcosm world, or your efforts for the assembly will be contra-productive. Since it is the responsibility of the leaders to coordinate the many helpers with teachings and counsel, pray for your leader. Pray for his effectiveness as leader. Pray for his seeing how to lead into the best growth rate for the group depending upon him. Assuming your leader is one truly chosen by the Lord, regard him as a leader standing in for the Lord Himself. If he is the leading spirit, as the pattern proclaims, the assembly will advance only as far as the assembly enables the leader to take it.

This may pose a difficulty for some, because the weekly and even daily contact tends to breed disrespect--perhaps even rejection from time to time. Jesus also perceived that and commented that a prophet in His own land has no honor (Matt. 13:57). Be careful! Little regard for even the small one of God's choosing is little regard for Jesus Christ. Even momentary rejection of a worthy leader is at least a temporary rejection of Jesus Christ (Matt. 25:40).

The history of every assembly has demonstrated, on many more than one occasion, an eagerness to pay special attention to visiting ministries, to other voices from outside, some far less qualified to help than those continuously ministering in the assembly. Sometimes they are followed for hundreds of miles, ostensibly for gathering the greater truths they offer. This is disregard for Jesus Christ, assuming your

leader is placed by Him. Pray for your leader's courage and faithfulness. He has the difficult and, as you well know, at times thankless assignment from the Father of welding you as a corporate body into one Faith to one Spirit who is the Lord, leaving no room for private interpretations and differences in opinion or belief (1 Cor. 1:10, Gal. 1:8-9, Jhn. 14:6).

Pray that you come to understand that no man can be a leader of any assembly, until that assembly will accept him and respect him as their leader. When the assembly does accept him, that acceptance should be across the board, or the assembly is guilty of dishonesty before the Lord. There may be today, or may yet come, some among you who can eventually just about break apart your assembly, by not honoring your leader. A Kingdom or assembly divided cannot continue to stand. You yourself cannot honestly pray for your leader, unless you also are showing your willingness to support him.

That support, of course, is more than verbal support, or it is no support. You should support him in the truths he presents, by helping others into more complete understanding. You should also explain enough to newcomers so they can follow along and not be lost in what is to them a multitude of words. You should support the ways and means in truth within which the leader is progressively doing the teaching and welding together. In a physical body, there is no excuse for one or more members going off on their own in manifest disagreement with the leadership--yet that still does occur.

There is but one assembly which is home for you, one body in which any member can intimately function to enlighten, build and strengthen. Concentrate your work there. Also, you should support your leader in his living needs and expenses. He is working for you with your approval. The laborer is worthy of his hire (Lk. 10:7, 1 Tim. 5:17-18). God designed the plan, not man, and so you violate it at your own peril.

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No leader can effectively serve your body full time, until you will accept him full time. You but cheat yourself and bring your own loss, if you choose otherwise.

Pray for that body which is being coordinated by the spiritual leader. In the assembly you listen to substantiated teaching and repetitive unveiling of God's plan for tithes and free-will offerings of both time and resources. Most assemblies listen but do not hear. If your leader in Truth is giving you the most important service of any in your past and present experience, if he is helping you toward treasure of more value than what any position in the entire world structure can or would pay (and God's Word says so), is his time devoted to your personal and corporate well-being not worth at least as much as the world is paying the highest salaried member in your assembly?

But look at the mercies and generosity of your loving Father! He has designed and given you His plan which will enable the leader of any reasonably sized assembly being most adequately provided for without it costing you one cent of your own money, if the plan is followed. Work diligently; then return to the Lord His 1/10 of the increase over living needs, through the Lord's bankers you employ (Lk. 19:12, 23-24). There is a reward for doing that alone, even if nothing else is done (Mal. 3:10).

But the record has shown and still shows that all assemblies reject their leaders, in some measure, in at least four areas. There is lack of (1) full support given to the Truth they labor long hours to place before you. If Truth is being placed before you, new treasures as well as old, and in a way that the wholeness of Truth is being continually approached in clear and organized teaching, the building or development of Christ's own Body is taking shape (Ps. 127:1). You can and are expected to help. But if the "Truth" does not match the Law and the Testimony (Isa.

8:20), you are foolish if you do not take off and go where it does.

Place yourself where the fulness of Truth is being developed in such a way that you are challenged to grow up and stand on your own two feet in Truth you have seen. Time is too short to cater to emotions and major in good feelings (2 Tim. 3:1, 7-8, Isa. 30:8-13, Jer. 5:30-31; 14:13-15). Of course anyone can choose his own teachers and his own brand of "truth." But if you do, that choice may not be the Lord's choice for you!

There is lack of (2) full cooperation and support of the ways and means the leader utilizes to bring you together into one integrated body and toward one determined goal of Spirit with but one Lord, one faith, and one total immersion into the unique Truth from one Keeper and Father (Eph. 4:3-6). Do you get to the class or worship meeting on time? Do you help set up the furniture and afterwards tidy up the place? Do you pray and get yourself fully attuned beforehand, or is that the leader's work to do for you?

Do you skip the gatherings and classes and events your leader works hard to make profitable for you, choosing instead something you will selfishly enjoy more? Do you participate in the whole meeting, or just the part you enjoy? Do you treat lightly your opportunity to consistently participate in the very special communion on each new moon? Are you vitally interested in each of the other communion times arranged by your leader? Or is it still the practice of every soul building his own house lying in ruins (Hag. 1:2-8)? Of course it is difficult to get the thought processes out of "Babylon;" it requires work and drive.

There is a lack, a result of either apathy or rebellion, of (3) thoughtful and careful administration of God's money to support His work. Whether you happen to think the leader needs it or not, it is God's money which He has

commanded into specific areas of application for building His Body. Although most assemblies have received repeated presentations on the matters of the Lord's tithe and personal freewill offerings, the listening has not always equated to hearing. Many questions still come in on "how do I compute my tithe" and, of course, many do not verbalize the same question.

The teaching has been clear and simple. The content is in print and available. But let's look at a typical pattern. The members of the assembly have reached a level of "offerings" (honestly speaking, the tithes cannot in any sense be seen as offerings), a level that continues fairly constant. One day the leader finds there must be additional funds for communion wine, or other necessary supplies, and so he announces the fact.

What then is the result? Usually, the leader notices the funds intended for general expenses increased to meet the announced expense. But he also notices the funds intended for the ministries decrease by the same amount. You see, what has happened is that the leader has neatly, though inadvertently, been volunteered to himself cover the amount for the extra need. He is "forced," because he is given no choice in the matter. Do you know some congregations place 30% of their gross income in the hands of their spiritual leaders? Those members care about their relationship!

There is not a place in western or eastern USA, let alone the world, where the fulness of Truth is being made available to any greater extent than to you who receive these teachings. You are challenged to factually refute the statement! Your leaders do not drive Cadillacs (not that they should). They economize in all conceivable ways so as to continue to be able to minister Truth and help to you.

In a very real sense, if true worth could be stated in monetary terms, your leaders pay for your eating out, your new car, your vacation

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trips. You are not aware of the multiple times your leaders joyfully sold personal property, moved to cheaper quarters, and cut back in ways you would not want to do yourself. They have done this, in order to continue to serve you more effectively. There is a substantial measure of truth in the statement that you are being subsidized by your leaders; and you have no idea what such oversight may yet cost.

Most assemblies are still building their own private houses, making the Lord's spiritual house appear as a pauper's. What does that typical homeowner average as a weekly investment in his own home? How much of the Lord's own money from years past is still sitting with his personal funds and being used to benefit him and his? Wherever there is gross misapplication of the Lord's property, it can be understood from the Lord's Word what will happen.

You look for much? It will come to little. And even that little, He will blow away. He will bring drought upon the land the hills, and on the grain and the wine and oil and vegetation and men and cattle, and upon all the toil of man's hands (Hag. 1:9-11). That is the core substance of The Great Tribulation now well along in development. But if the whole tenth of the increase is brought into His house, the proving of the Lord will stand in such blessing that there shall not be enough room to receive it. Yet, in effect, many say it is useless to serve God and it is without profit to build His house (Mal. 3:8-14, Lk. 19:16-17, 23-26).

And there is lack in the assemblies of (4) spending time and effort of most members to take on some of the things their leader now does. That would release more time for him to be of more benefit to you. Do you take advantage of all the instruction available to these assemblies so you will be better fitted to help him in counseling and answering questions from the younger ones? What do you do to help the leader coordinate that which needs to be done? Would he

have more time if his lawn was mowed, or some gardening or housework done?

Pray for zeal in the group, for enthusiasm in seeking to apply all the teaching in Truth received and yet to be received. Pray for a persistent spirit within the assemblies which will draw outside attention toward their faithfulness in support of Truth exclusively. Pray for a patient spirit also which will recognize that habit changing often takes much effort and considerable time.

Pray that here there will be a removal from the status and the Lord's indictment of the Laodicean Church of the "righteous ones," peculiarly the Church of this completing period of the age. With somewhat greater revelation than is common in Christendom, it is so easy to be deceived and ease yourself into the lukewarm attitude of "I am rich and grown wealthy, and have need of nothing more."

It is so easy to escape realizing the almost frightening need for a great deal more spiritual impartation. That alone can yet lead from the now almost naked condition into being clothed in white, from spiritual blindness and all its related poverty and wretchedness into seeing the glory offered at the Cross, and finally coming into the understanding of the wholeness of Truth and the total victory and overflowing joy of its practice (Rev. 3:14-20).

Pray for the unifying of the individuals making up your assembly into coordinated prayer for the transformation of the oft-time prevalent personal attitudes which actually hinder the service that the leaders are seeking to accomplish for the Lord. Too many have not yet actually heard enough of the Word of Truth to have become unified, even though they have listened. Most are not yet demonstrating their interest in diligently building a personal Lord's house, so they will have something to live in during Great Tribulation. Far better there be a house to live in, rather than one to die in.

God is faithful to answer prayer presented in spirit and in Truth. There can be full confidence in His response when the prayer has involved your whole person, when it is not a mechanical or a ritual speech lacking thought and concentration, and when it is built on the frame of God's plan for man's progress. Be alert and watchful as you continue to pray for development within your person and in your assembly, by which development you can be accounted worthy to escape the Lord's severe disciplining on the non-conformists and remain upright in His presence (Lk. 21:36). You probably will need to learn something more about how to recognize an answer from God.

Many among us have gone through considerable teaching too fast for it to have been worked into the soul and so have less than a firm foundation on which to proceed. The fault, if it is a fault, is not in the amount of teaching, but the lack of time available or utilized for its integration into the thinking, feeling and living process. How often has a Christian prayed for strength and had his prayer answered by the loving Father through opportunities to work against opposition which develop the strength to overcome. But then the answer is refused, because of its being unpalatable, and therefore "must not be from God." If the answer you need is His showing you the presence of a critical attitude, thank Him and go to work on it.

And one thing further, although it should not be necessary. As a Christian, do not go into this suggested program of careful prayer, unless you do so honestly. It has been noted time and again that Christians, yes Christians, are careless with their words. They don't actually mean to lie when they promise a favor or make an appointment, or agree to do this or that, but something comes up making it not too important to fulfill the promise. Promises to friends, especially to other Christians, seem to be especially vulnerable. Yet those should be the most faithfully kept, without defaulting any

others (Matt. 12:36, Rev. 21:27, 22:14-15). The word of promise from a Christian becomes Law--to him (Matt. 5:37). Be watchful to be true to your every word!

Will it be worthwhile to sacrifice comfort and convenience, even to a very small extent, over days running into weeks and months? The Word of God says so. "You shall find Me, when you search (continually) for Me with your whole heart" (Jer. 29:13). "All who continuously come toward Me, I will in no way cast out" (Jhn. 6:37). "Then I will not be put to shame, when I have respect for all Your commandments" (Ps. 119:6).

God has said to His own, "I will not, I will not, I will not in any way fail you, give you up, leave you or forsake you" (Heb. 13:5). So take comfort, be encouraged and confidently proclaim, especially to yourself, "The Lord is my helper, according to my cooperation with Him in spirit and in Truth." According to patterns shown, each year from now on can and should be bonus years for your spiritual profit. In the Lord's grace, may it be so!

There should be the daily and constant walk, with the objective of reaching higher ground in personal conformance to the perfect plan. There also should be the readiness to cooperate with the Lord in the developments in the political, the commercial and the ecclesiastical arenas. Failure in the first two brings separation from the Father (Isa. 59:1-2). Inadequate response in the third brings a trigger-trapping into destruction (Matt. 11:6 - literal translation). Preparation involves the searching out and application of what the Word of God really describes as God's perfect plan to bring about needful change in thinking habits, emotional patterns and physical responses. Then there will be a new direction of determination and new desires - a new spirit and a new heart, as promised!

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